



EXHIBIT 16  
DATE 1-15-09  
HB 2

## Testimony in front of the Appropriations Sub-Committee on Health and Human Services

Representative Teresa Henry, Chairwomen and Members of the Committee

My name is **Geoffrey Birnbaum** and I am the **Executive Director of Youth Homes Inc.** headquartered in **Missoula, Montana.**

My job is to give you a brief history and the evolution of our services to children in Montana to the present...

To mark it all the Paul Clark Home was the 1<sup>st</sup> home for children and was created in the early 1900's by one of the Copper Barons in memory of his son.

State Institutions were created in the 1920's as part of the social movement to improve child welfare.

By the early 70's institutional populations had grown to:

• Mountain View School	100 (now Riverside for Girls)
• Pine Hills School	145
• Warm Springs	24
• Twin Bridges	185 (closed in 1976)
• Swan River YF Camp	58 (also closed now)

The total of youth in state institutional settings 512

### Funding and Development Chronology

- Before 1970 – state funded state institutions & counties funded foster care
- 1971 – Montana Board of Crime Control started 1<sup>st</sup> community group homes
- 1975 – Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (now DPHHS) started another set of community group homes
- Mid 70's – federal funds appeared in form of IV E and Title XX to augment county foster care funds and group homes
- 1988 – State assumed responsibility for all foster care with advent of Department of Family Services
- 1989 – Montana started Medicaid refinance shifting some of costs from placing agencies to the State's Mental Health programs - starting with residential Treatment Centers – then therapeutic Group and Foster Care.
- Mid 90's – added Family Support Services

### Today

- Only state institutions are Pine Hills and Riverside with a total population ranging from 90-120 youth.

- Remaining youth needing and in residential placements are in private treatment centers, community group homes and therapeutic foster care.
- The system today funds most of residential treatment through our state children's mental health system with Child Protection and Youth Court partnering by providing fees to cover room and board.
- The vast costs of this level of care are covered by Medicaid as witnessed by the amount in front of you for such services.

All that we really want you to know is...

1. There has been no major increase in the amount of out-of-home care in Montana over the last years but rather a shift of funding from the social services system to the mental health system.
2. Where increases have occurred is in work by many of the same agencies to provide better family services to reduce or maintain a reasonable level of out-of-home placement need.
3. There has been a transfer from state-managed facilities for children to more cost-effective privately run community services.
4. The services provided by private, mostly non-profit organizations, are today critical to helping our State meet its commitment and meet our statutory obligations to protect and serve our children and youth.
5. That as providers we are willing to supplement our rates through community support and philanthropic giving.
6. We are gratefully and want to thank you for all your consideration and concern regarding these services and what it means for Montana's children and all of our futures.

Respectfully submitted



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